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CHURCH TROUBLES
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CHURCH TROUBLES
AND COMMON SENSE

A PLEA FOR
REASON AND RESPONSIBILITY

BY

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PREFACE

THE two titles of this volume are intended to sum up its main scope and purpose. It represents an endeavour to estimate, from a common-sense point of view, the troublesome state of things which has lately arisen in the Church; from a point of view, that is, so far as possible free from personal or party bias and directed chiefly to the more permanent and essential aspects of the subject with which it deals. How far the endeavour is a successful one the reader must judge for himself. There can be little doubt, however, that it is high time for it to be made. No fair-minded person who has waded through the numerous manifestoes and counter-manifestoes and speeches and articles on church questions which have been monopolizing so much space in our daily and weekly press; to say nothing of the voluminous commentary of correspondence by which they have been accompanied; can have much hesitation on this point. He cannot fail, I think, to have been struck by the way in which points

in dispute have been taken out of their context and treated as if they had an isolated and independent existence; in which differences have been dwelt upon and magnified out of all proportion to their importance; and in which, as a result, feelings have been excited and animosities aroused to an extent which has led some to believe that we are on the edge of a great catastrophe from which the Church of England will emerge with difficulty, if she emerges at all. It is a mistake; no such catastrophe is imminent; and if those who anticipate it would but get out of the atmosphere of rancour and rhetoric and look at things as they really are, they would find that the main current of church life is going on steadily and soberly enough beneath these surface storms, and will continue to do so when they have spent their force and have long since been forgotten.

It is one object of this volume to point out some considerations which may help in making the truth of this assertion clear. That is the object referred to in the first title.

And then another hardly less important object is indicated in the second title. Every time of excitement is also a time of enlightenment. Facts

and principles and needs which are apt to be overlooked when everything is going smoothly, are brought to the surface then and enabled to assert their claims to acknowledgment. Facts to which we have become accustomed are often not recognized till we are somehow shaken out of our customary modes of thought and feeling; principles are regarded as things of no account till some pressing practical problem demands solution and we find ourselves unable to deal with it by rule of thumb; needs do not become insistent till the evils which they cause are pressed home by circumstances.

So it is in the present instance. The chief fact which this controversy is bringing to light is, I believe, the fact that the differences which divide churchmen are not fundamental, but are, in the main, differences of interpretation and proportion: the great principle which the necessities of the times seem to demand is the principle of sober balanced judgment; and the chief need which is becoming more apparent every day is the need of men who can exercise such judgment.

Reasonable and responsible men are what we chiefly want, whether in Church or State. Not so much systems and theories as men who are big

enough and strong enough to see the necessary limitations of all theories, and to allow for those limitations in practical application.

But such men are not to be had for the asking. If they are to be available for the service of the Church certain conditions must be fulfilled ; and not the least important of these is that they should not be met at every turn by pecuniary embarrassments, and should not have to devote their chief energies to the distasteful task of constant eleemosynary appeals.

This may appear a very commonplace consideration, but it is one which needs to be strongly emphasized at the present time. Many laymen seem to suppose that a clergyman has access to some means of satisfying his physical wants which are denied to other men, and that they have therefore a right to demand the services of clergymen of high character and attainments for a remuneration far below that which such qualities would command in any other walk of life. The supposition is an erroneous one ; the grace of Holy Orders does not confer immunity from the ordinary experiences of human life ; clergymen have to be fed and clothed like other men ; they often have families to maintain and educate, and

the expenses thus entailed are not less than those which laymen similarly placed would have to meet.

If the comfort and convenience of the clergy of the existing generation were the only matter at stake, facts of this kind, however important for them, would be irrelevant to the subject with which this volume deals. But the question of clerical sustentation has much wider bearings. It is intimately connected with that of the future supply of clergy, and through it with that of the general character of church life here in England.

This connection I have tried to make clear, noticing some of the chief facts which bear upon it, and summing them up in the form of a concrete instance.

The character of the appendix is thus accounted for. It may seem a little incongruous to conclude a discussion on a subject of general interest with what looks like an appeal for a local charity; but no more suitable method of bringing the matter home suggested itself at the time. For the case of Kidderminster is typical of many other important parishes in this country. So far indeed as the general tone of church life is concerned it is very favourably placed. Few parishes have

been more fortunate in their clerical staffs, or can show a better record of devoted work and self-denying zeal in days gone by and at the present time. If, then, it is necessary in such a parish to call marked attention to the fact that the Church's influence cannot maintain itself at a high level unless her ministry is more generously supported, the implication is that it must be equally or more necessary in a great many others.

It would have been possible to make this general reference more obvious by suppressing all local allusions and statistics. But on the whole I thought it better to let the sermon be printed just as it was delivered. It is only intended as an illustration, and the more definite and detailed an illustration is, the more useful it is as a rule for its purpose. I must express my gratitude though to the Vicar of Kidderminster for allowing me to make the domestic circumstances of his parish public property in this way. I need hardly say that I obtained his consent before doing so.

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CHURCH TROUBLES

AND COMMON SENSE

I.

THE Church of England is said to be passing through a grave crisis. How far this is true it is difficult to say. The ecclesiastical atmosphere certainly seems to be charged with a good deal of restlessness. But restlessness in any society is not necessarily a cause for anxiety. It may be merely a symptom of healthy activity, the natural and inevitable reaction of conservative feeling and traditional prejudice against anything which savours of novelty and change.

We are told, indeed, that in the present instance far deeper causes must be assigned: that the existing restlessness is the token and expression of a profound dissatisfaction on the part of the great majority of English churchmen with the trend of ecclesiastical affairs.

No convincing proofs, however, have hitherto been forthcoming of the truth of this assertion, and there are some facts which are difficult to reconcile with it.

To start with, there is the fact that church work on what are called "extreme" lines does not seem to be in any want of adequate pecuniary support. On the contrary, it is generally acknowledged that the offertories and subscription lists in "extreme" churches will, as a rule, compare very favourably indeed with those of their less advanced neighbours. This fact ought to count for something. It proves that lay opinion is not unanimous; that there is a considerable body of that opinion favourable to what we are told is a purely clerical movement; that if there is a cleavage in the Church, it is not so much between clergy and laity as between two bodies of opinion in both of which the clerical and lay elements are represented.

But at any rate, it is answered, there can be no doubt as to the character of lay opinion as a whole. The vast majority of English laymen dislike the advanced type of churchmanship; nay

more, they are bitterly opposed to it, and if that type continues to assert itself their opposition will soon be changed into open and uncompromising hostility.

Now, I think it is Bishop Berkeley who somewhere says, "It conduceth to clearness and propriety that we distinguish things very different by different names"; and the warning is not altogether irrelevant here.

For what is meant by lay opinion? Who are the laity of the Church whose opinions and sentiments a section of the clergy is said to be outraging?

If by the church laity is meant the whole body of people who call themselves churchmen, it is plain that a distinction has at once to be made. For, as we all know to our sorrow, a large portion of these are only churchmen in name; knowing little and caring less about church matters; regarding them as things which do not concern them; calling themselves churchmen because their fathers called themselves so, or because it is socially convenient to be supposed to be attached to a religious denomination of some kind, and most convenient,

therefore, to be attached to the most "respectable" denomination.

The opinions of such people evidently do not count for much. So far as they exist, they would probably alternate between a vague sympathy with earnest work of any kind, and an equally vague dislike for enthusiasms and convictions in which they do not share. These are not the people who are likely to bring about a crisis. One only has to think of the ordinary type of so-called church laymen whom one meets in a London club, or at a Friendly Society Conference, or at any promiscuous gathering of professional or business men, to recognize how absurd such an anticipation is. That is another fact which we have to recognize; a considerable proportion—probably the majority—of church laymen are absolutely quiescent, absolutely indifferent. They care no more about movements in the Church than if those movements were taking place in the planet Mars. To talk about their being stirred up to some violent and drastic course of action, is to use words which have no relation to fact.

It is only then with the opinions of laymen who are interested in church affairs that we need concern ourselves; and here, again, it is difficult to estimate what those opinions predominantly are. For their interest varies from a mere external one; from an interest in the Church merely as a political organization or a philanthropic agency; to one arising from intense religious conviction.

We may, at any rate in this connection, leave High Church laymen out of account. It is generally acknowledged that they form a considerable, an increasing, and a very active body; and they not merely stand committed to High Church practices, but are, we are told on good authority, often far in advance of the very clergy whom they are supposed to follow. We may also leave out of account those laymen who, though they object to being called by any party name, are more or less in sympathy with the High Church point of view. No one, I think, can deny that their numbers and their influence are also by no means inconsiderable.

When people then talk about the profound dissatisfaction of the laity, they can only mean the laity of pronounced Low Church opinions, or

a certain proportion of that much larger section, who, if asked to designate themselves, would probably say that they were "moderate" churchmen.

Now I am not concerned to deny the existence of this dissatisfaction; I believe that it does exist, and I shall presently try to give some account of it. But the whole character of the present controversy makes it impossible to believe that it exists as yet in an acute and critical form. If it did, it would, before this, have expressed itself by very different methods and very different mouth-pieces from those employed in the present agitation.

It is not merely impossible to believe, but it is almost insulting to suggest, that the belligerent brawlers and the blustering controversialists who have been lately so much in evidence represent any considerable body of earnest religious opinion of any kind. When all their tall talk has subsided, it will be found that English churchmen as a whole have been little affected by it, and that they have no intention whatever of being betrayed into extreme courses of action which could only serve to accentuate our present differences, and which might, if pushed too far, end in disruption.

II.

BUT this does not exhaust the matter. However little value we are inclined to attach to the offensive tactics of a few noisy partisans, we cannot fail to recognize that there are many churchmen who, while dissociating themselves from their violence and vulgarity, are by no means free from apprehension as to the tendencies of the so-called High Church movement—men whose character and antecedents entitle them to respect, and whose antagonism it ought to be the duty of every earnest High Churchman to mitigate and, if possible, to remove.

What then is it that they fear? Not ritual development in itself. Ritual appreciation is largely a matter of temperament and taste, and practices which a generation ago would have been looked upon as extreme are, as we know, now taken as a matter of course. Not any direct doctrinal teaching. The English mind does not move easily in the region of theology, and it is doubtful whether any set of doctrines merely

taught as such would arouse its attention, far less its hostility.

But it is the practical system which a certain kind of ritual is supposed to express and to minister to, and which a certain kind of doctrinal teaching is supposed to inculcate, that is really dreaded, and there is no doubt that that system is, to the minds of many Englishmen, summed *from* up in the word *sacerdotalism*.

The word itself, like most words used in popular controversy, suggests nothing very definite. Many of those who use it most frequently would probably have some difficulty in saying exactly what they mean by it, or in stating the reasons of their dislike for the idea which it conveys to their minds. But the fact of their dislike cannot be disputed. However vague, however ill-defined the popular conception of sacerdotalism may be, it is by its relation to that conception, and to the order of things which it is supposed to represent, that our present disquietude is generally explained. It is because the High Church movement is credited with strongly sacerdotal tendencies that it is regarded with grave suspicion and distrust by

many Englishmen who would otherwise be tolerant of it, or even sympathetic with it; who have no prejudices against ornate modes of worship; who are quite innocent of theological predilections; and who would be the first to acknowledge the sincerity and earnestness of individual High Churchmen, and the debt which the Church owes to their self-sacrificing zeal.

Now whether this distrust is or is not justified, the tendency which awakens it undoubtedly exists. The High Church movement is undoubtedly a sacerdotal movement. Sacerdotalism in some sense of the word is of the very essence of its teaching, the pivot round which that teaching turns. To the High Churchman the ministry is no mere affair of order or convenience. It is a divine institution, a priesthood entrusted with the performance of certain definite functions which are necessary to the welfare of the Body of Christ; with functions of government and teaching and discipline, and most characteristic and important of all, with the function of pleading man's weakness before God, and of bringing God's gifts to man.

The apparent hardness and exclusiveness of the

doctrine is doubtless much mitigated in its actual application. Few High Churchmen, for instance, would assert that the priesthood is the sole medium even of sacramental grace. They would probably say that it was the authorized and accredited medium, but that God is not tied by His means, and that they are not therefore concerned to deny the action of His Holy Spirit in numberless instances where, through ignorance or through prejudice, the priestly office is disregarded or denied.

But still, the doctrine itself forms an essential element in the High Church creed. High Churchmen hold to it strongly, and insist on it strenuously in their teaching and their practical system; and in order to estimate their position fairly, and the criticism which that position has aroused, it will be necessary to consider very briefly the chief arguments which they are accustomed to advance in its support.

In the first place, then, on *historical* grounds they assert that the sacerdotal conception of the Christian ministry is the only one which is adequate to the actual circumstances of its first

formation and subsequent development. The Apostles, they say, the first Christian ministers, were directly appointed by our Lord Himself; the chief functions of their office were committed to them by His hands; and the priestly character was stamped upon them in the terms of their original commission, "As My Father sent Me, so send I you";* "He that heareth you heareth Me; and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."†

Their office was, then, essentially a priestly one. They were to be the representatives of God to man; His ambassadors of reconciliation; invested with plenary authority and power for this purpose; bearing in their hands God's gifts of pardon and grace, carrying back to God man's tribute of penitence and praise. And the principle thus established was perpetuated and developed all through the history of the Christian Church. The Christian ministry always received its authority from above, always received it from those who had been already entrusted with the right of transmitting it.

* S. John xx. 21.

† S. Luke x. 16.

The few apparent exceptions to this rule count for little against the overwhelming mass of evidence on the other side; and they are themselves capable of easy explanation. The fact, for instance, that the Epistle of Clement was not addressed to, and does not make any mention of, a Bishop of Corinth, may afford some presumption that there was no such official there at the time it was written; but in view of the further fact that a little later on Corinth was undoubtedly the seat of a bishopric, this is the very furthest point to which its evidence can be strained. Or, to take another exceptional instance, the fact that the Church of Alexandria was possibly for a short time governed by a body of presbyters (and the evidence on this point is by no means conclusive), only need prove that the episcopal office was during that period put into commission, as it were, and that the functions generally discharged by a single bishop were discharged by several acting conjointly. But even if much stronger proofs were forthcoming that the mon-episcopal system of government was not at once universally adopted, the historical grounds of the principle which High

Churchmen contend for would not be touched—the principle that authority to perform ministerial functions of any kind in the Church always has come from above, and has always been conferred by those who had themselves been authorized to confer it. Nay, more than this. Mon-episcopacy itself, they assert, by its universal adoption at a very early stage of the Church's history, is proved to be the normal type to which the organization of the Church as it developed always tended, and was therefore divinely intended, to conform. The exact period at which the conformity became universal is a matter of minor importance to those who regard the Church as something far more than a mechanical, ready-made system; who regard it as a living body, the organ of a divine life, whose growth adapted itself to the requirements of that life, and at each successive stage became a more adequate expression of its fundamental principle.

Secondly, on what we may call *intellectual* grounds, High Churchmen hold that the sacerdotal principle is involved in that of the Incarnation.

For according to their view of the Christian

revelation, its characteristic feature, the feature which chiefly distinguishes it from other religions and philosophies, is this—that in the Incarnation the Divine Being deliberately chose to embody Himself in human form, and thus to consecrate external sensible things as the means by which He displayed His life to man and conferred His gifts on them. This method of communication, once established, must, they say, have been perpetuated. It is quite impossible to believe that its application ended on the day of the Ascension. Such a belief would involve the admission that Christianity as we know it is essentially different from that of Christ's immediate followers; that the Apostles and first disciples embraced it under conditions totally divergent from those under which it is presented at the present day. It came to them from a definite external source; appealed to them through definite external means; and placed them in relation with a definite external order of things. If after the Ascension all this ceased; if since that time there has been no definite external embodiment of the Christian Spirit in the world; no duly accredited organs by which it expresses itself; the

resources which Christianity places at our disposal, however much enriched they may be by fuller knowledge and greater insight into the Divine nature, in no wise differ in kind from those available by an enlightened Jew or heathen of ancient times.

Such a conception of Christianity High Churchmen regard as intellectually untenable. The intellectual difficulties in the way of the acceptance of a stupendous event like that of a historical Incarnation are very great. They would become absolutely insuperable if that event had to be regarded as an isolated occurrence; a transitory and comparatively unimportant episode in God's revelation of Himself, carrying with it no religious results which might not have been attained by the means used by Him in His previous dealings with mankind. Granted that the Incarnation meant a completely new departure; the starting-point of a definite and continuous embodiment of the Divine Presence in the forms of sense; granted this, and the event becomes at any rate adequate to our conception of God's character and methods of action. But deny it, and the belief in a

historical Incarnation becomes inconsistent with that conception, and therefore impossible. If we then hold to Christianity at all, it will only be in virtue of some so-called spiritual interpretation of the facts of Christ's history, which will enable us to accept His moral and spiritual teaching while ignoring his supernatural nature and claims.

Considerations of this kind dispose High Churchmen strongly towards the sacerdotal conception. The principle of the Incarnation, they say, is only intelligible on condition of its extension for all time in a visible society and visible sacraments; and a divinely-appointed priesthood, tracing its succession by definite visible links from our Lord Himself, is a necessary part of this condition.

It is necessary to the idea of a visible church; for a society which claims to be the embodiment of the Divine Spirit can only substantiate that claim when it can trace the organized arrangements which distinguish it from other forms of human society to a divine origin. It is necessary to the idea of a sacrament; for the act of consecration by which any outward object is set apart for sacra-

mental uses, and constituted as the medium of some special spiritual gift, can only be performed by those who have authority from the Divine Being for this purpose; and our assurance of the validity of the act must, therefore, depend upon their ability to produce well-attested credentials for their reception of that authority.

This is only the barest outline of an argument which would need to be both amplified and qualified before it could be presented in an adequate form. But the line of thought involved in it is one to which many High Churchmen attach great importance. Indeed, it is hardly too much to say that to minds of a certain order its importance is of a crucial character, and that the alternative to its acceptance would be for them nothing less than the rejection of Christianity itself as ordinarily understood.

The third reason which causes High Churchmen to cling strongly to the sacerdotal principle is what we may call a *practical* reason. It seems to them to meet an urgent need, and to represent the corrective to a dangerous tendency in the religious life of the present time. For many Englishmen,

they say, show a strong tendency to regard their religion as a matter which concerns themselves alone: something which they have accepted simply on personal grounds, and the truth of which they test almost exclusively by personal considerations. They hold certain beliefs and practise certain observances because these beliefs and these observances happen to suit them; they reject other beliefs and dislike other observances for precisely similar reasons. The tendency is probably in most instances hardly conscious of itself, but it undoubtedly exists in a very potent form, and if carried to a certain point it would plainly destroy the possibility of a common religious creed and of a common religious life expressing such a creed. Indeed, in the last resort, it would be inconsistent with the acceptance of Christianity itself. For the claim of Christianity is essentially an authoritative claim. It comes to us as objective truth embodied in a definite external system, and demands that men should adapt themselves to it, not attempt to adapt it to themselves. It refuses to allow its beliefs or its practices or its requirements to be brought to the bar of individual idiosyncrasy or

personal prejudice; it claims that they should be tried at no lower tribunal than that of reason and the moral sense. This is its claim; and it is because the doctrine of a visible Church with visible sacraments entrusted to her care, and with a priesthood divinely appointed to guard and guarantee those sacraments presents this claim in a clear and unmistakable form, that the doctrine commends itself to the practical instincts of many religious-minded men even before they have satisfied themselves as to the historical or intellectual grounds of its justification. As Bishop Butler puts it, "The very notion of a visible Church implies positive institutions, for its visibility consists in them. Take away everything of the kind, and you lose the very notion itself." Positive institutions belong to the very idea of a visible Church, and in proportion to the importance attached to the functions which the visible Church has to perform, will the demand be made that those institutions should make themselves independent of changing caprice by tracing their origin to direct divine authority.

We often, at the present day, find a theoretical

acceptance of the objective character of Christian truth combined with a practical religious attitude, founded upon mere personal predilection. That combination at any rate, High Churchmen say, would not be possible were Christianity presented, as it was intended to be presented, in connection with a definite external system, which can vindicate its claim to be its authorized depositary and exponent—the medium of its expression and the channel of its power. Becoming a Christian would then be all one with becoming a churchman; and becoming a churchman implies taking as the base-principle of one's religious life the conception of one's responsibility to, and dependence upon, a clearly-defined external order of things existing apart from us and independently of us, but in submissive conformity with which the highest ends of existence can alone be achieved.

This is only the barest and baldest outline of the case for sacerdotalism, but it is perhaps sufficient to indicate the main arguments by which that case is ordinarily supported. It goes without saying that many do not regard these arguments

as by any means convincing; but all fair-minded men, who take the trouble to look into them, will, I think, admit that they are worthy of consideration.

Such an admission alone would be well worth having. For once it was generally made it would no longer be possible to charge sacerdotalists with mental or moral obliquity, or, in the airy manner of platform or newspaper controversy, to describe the whole movement with which they are identified as little more than a deliberate conspiracy on the part of a designing priesthood against the spiritual liberties of those who are weak enough, or foolish enough, to submit themselves to its control.

III.

So much for the High Church argument. Now let us turn for a moment to the other side. Why do Low Churchmen seem not merely to reject this principle of sacerdotalism, but often to regard it with violent apprehension and dislike?

In attempting to answer this question we are met at once by an apparent paradox; for few Churchmen of any school really reject the principle itself or the arguments by which it is defended. On the contrary it is not, I think, too much to say that the great majority of Churchmen practically, though often perhaps unconsciously, accept that principle, and recognize the validity of those arguments.

Most churchmen admit that ordination means something; that a priest receives something in the way of authority and power which he did not possess before he became a priest; and that the bishop, in conferring that something upon him, not merely represents the Church as its chosen

officer and mouthpiece, but also in some sense represents the Head of the Church. In other words, by allowing that the ministerial function is, to some extent at any rate, devolved from above, and not wholly evolved from below, they admit the root principle of sacerdotalism. This admission is implied in the very fact of belonging to a Church which insists on episcopal ordination as a necessary condition for the discharge of any important ministerial function, and there is hardly a doubt that it represents something of tangible value in most churchmen's conception of the necessities of the religious life. How few churchmen, for instance, however "low" their professed opinions may be, would be willing to have the Holy Communion administered to them on their death-bed by an unordained person. They might explain their unwillingness in some other way, but in their hearts they would probably feel that ordination provided for them a security and a guarantee with which, in the last resort, they would not care to dispense.

Here is a case in point. A few years ago a schism was started by some discontented church-

men with the avowed object of forming a Church which, while retaining the episcopal system of government, would be completely free from any traces of the sacerdotal spirit. The easiest and most obvious way of attaining this object would have been for the newly-formed body to choose one of its own adherents as its bishop, and to depute to him authority to exercise episcopal functions. It is a remarkable fact, however, that this course was not followed, but that they sought and with some difficulty obtained as their first bishop one who had been consecrated to that office in accordance with the requirements of the English Church; and, so far from keeping this implied recognition of the sacerdotal principle in the background, they seemed inclined to emphasize the validity of the orders thus obtained as a basis of their claim for support.

The case is very much the same with regard to the other main arguments by which the principle of sacerdotalism is defended. Their validity is seldom denied by those who take the trouble to understand them, and important practical deductions from them will be found incorporated

in the working basis of nearly all the more active forms of church life.

Thus, most thoughtful churchmen would agree that the Incarnation involves the sacramental principle in some form or another, with its necessary corollary of a ministry to whose hands the sacraments are committed by the same Power which makes them effectual means of grace: nor would they have any hesitation in acknowledging that a religious life which finds its sole expression in individual efforts and experiences can hardly fail to degenerate into sentimentalism, and that the only effective way of avoiding this danger is by laying constant emphasis on the claims of a corporate organization to which individuals are related as the members of a body are to the whole.

If, then, this be so; if nearly all English churchmen, consciously or unconsciously, in practice if not in theory, recognize the principle of sacerdotalism and act upon it to a greater or less extent, how are the present acute differences of opinion on the subject to be explained? Why is it that the tendency of some churchmen

to emphasize the sacerdotal point of view should inspire others with alarm, amounting at times to almost hysterical hostility?

I believe the true explanation to be something of this kind. It is not so much sacerdotalism in itself which is feared, as its extreme and exaggerated development; and it is because the trend of the High Church movement seems to be setting strongly in this direction that that movement is regarded by many church laymen with considerable uneasiness and suspicion. The fantastic and inflated terms in which such feelings sometimes express themselves ought not to blind us to their real character and intensity. No sensible people anticipate as a possible outcome of the High Church movement, or of any other movement, the establishment of a general system of priestly tyranny which would stamp out religious and perhaps political liberty under the iron heel of spiritual despotism. Bogey terrors of this kind only haunt the imaginations of the exceptionally ignorant and ill-informed. The English nation never was and never will be a priest-ridden nation. Even during the time of the Roman supremacy the

level of religious liberty was probably, if anything, higher than that of liberty in the other departments of life; and to suppose that in these later days a national Church, deprived of the enormous support which that supremacy supplied, could dominate the wills and consciences of a people which has attained to a standard of personal freedom hitherto unknown in human history, is to suppose something so impossible as hardly to merit serious notice.

But what many people who are neither ignorant nor ill-informed do fear, is the alienation of the religious life of the nation, so far as that life is identified with the Church of England, from the broader currents of its social and political life, by the establishment of a religious type which it is impossible for the bulk of laymen to accept; and, as one of the results of this alienation, much domestic difficulty and disquietude, and many personal and social estrangements; evils which are bound to become more and more accentuated in proportion as religious claims and interests become more and more separated from those of ordinary secular life.

"We do not personally fear priestly tyranny," many Englishmen will say, "we are well able to take care of ourselves in this respect. But what we do fear is the interference of the priest in our homes. Our authority must be supreme there, and we cannot tolerate the establishment of any influence which may compete with it. And more than this. We value religion for ourselves; we do not wish to break with it; and that is why we object so strongly to its being presented under conditions which make it practically impossible for us to accept it. The purely ecclesiastical type of religion which is being developed so fast nowadays is repellent to us. We don't understand it and don't sympathize with it, and if it is to become the predominant type in the Church of England so much the worse for the Church of England. We want a practical religion which we can carry with us into our daily life, and which will help us in our efforts to become better and truer men there; but a religion moulded on mediæval models and dominated by a monastic or semi-monastic spirit, and this is the kind of religion which the High Church movement seems

to be producing, is not suitable for our purposes. It may do very well for religious specialists, for priests, or for a certain number of leisured laymen with ecclesiastical tastes; but it won't do for people like ourselves. Christianity to be serviceable to us must be translated into the terms of workaday life; and it is partly because High Churchism seems bent on insisting upon religious standards, and fostering religious modes of thought and feeling which are utterly out of relation to the exigencies and experiences of workaday life, that we object to it, and regard its progress with undisguised anxiety."

IV.

IT is not difficult to anticipate what the High Church rejoinder to such criticisms would be. It would be easy to point out that a good deal that is said about the absolute nature of parental authority and influence has only a limited relation to the actual arrangements of domestic life here in England ; that as a matter of fact the ordinary English home is not regulated on autocratic lines ; that as a matter of fact parental authority and influence are far from reigning supreme there ; that most parents delegate their functions of training and instruction and discipline to a very large extent to others, and tend to delegate them more every day. The tendency may be a bad one ; parents may have no right to shirk their responsibilities in these matters. But we must take things as we find them, and it may with some justice be urged that a parent who hands over the whole secular education of his children to others during the most impressionable period of

their lives, and contents himself with only a general and often a very meagre superintendence, ought, if he is a religious man, to be not merely willing but anxious that the religious part of that education should be carried on by duly authorized persons ; nor has he any just ground for complaint if the relationship of intimate personal influence and guidance on which all true religious education depends, becomes permanently established ; in other words, if the priest who has prepared the child for confirmation is naturally accepted as the religious guide and the confidential adviser of later life.

“You allow your child’s nature to be moulded and his character to be developed,” the High Churchman will say, “by a thousand and one personal influences not emanating from the home, and over which you exercise only a very indirect control ; why not allow the religious influence to take its place among these under conditions commensurate to the enormously important part which it ought to play ? Not therefore left vaguely to chance exponents, but presented and applied by those who are duly

qualified and accredited. By all means take good care that they are duly qualified and accredited; just as you would take good care that the schoolmaster or governess to whom you committed the secular education of your children was fit to undertake it. But, having satisfied your mind on this point, why not allow to the religious teacher the same scope which you allow as a matter of course to the secular teacher; or why regard as irritating interference in the one case, what you accept as legitimate influence in the other? A schoolmaster, who did not impress himself in his personal and official capacity on the boys he had to do with, would be looked upon as a failure; why should a priest be regarded with suspicion on exactly opposite grounds? Moreover, your attitude is not consistent. Many dissenting ministers and Low Church clergymen have very intimate individual relations with attached members of their flocks, and exercise very strong personal influence over them. Why blame High Churchmen merely because they present in a systematized form and carry out in a systematized manner their function of personal

and confidential guidance—a function belonging to the very essence of the ministerial office, and the due discharge of which under some form or another is generally regarded as a chief test of ministerial efficiency and success.

“Or, again, as to the religious type which High Churchism tends to develop. If your objections to it are based on the fact that its predominant characteristic is ‘other worldliness’; that the main sanctions which support it, and the main motives which inspire it claim to be derived from supernatural sources; we admit the truth of your criticism, but we deny its cogency. For our strong conviction is, that a religion is effective just in proportion to the extent to which it places men in intimate relation to the supernatural, and leads them to depend upon supernatural aids, and to identify themselves with supernatural ideals; ineffective, even so far as this world is concerned, just in proportion as it leaves the supernatural out of sight, and confines itself to the aims and aspirations of a merely temporal order of things.

“But if you mean that the High Church type is necessarily or ordinarily an unpractical type;

that the High Churchman, so far as he is true to his principles, must put himself out of touch with the interests of ordinary secular life; we need only point to facts for an answer. No one can say, with any approach to truth, that High Churchmen shirk their social responsibilities, or refuse to face the social problems of ignorance and poverty and suffering and sin; no one whose acquaintance with High Churchmen, whether lay or clerical, is other than very limited, can assert that their standard of manliness and truth and true-heartedness is on the whole lower than that of other men. The High Church movement at the present time owes its strength and influence mainly to the fact that its most pronounced exponents have been the very opposite of anæmic antiquarians or morbid monks; to the fact that in spite of much obloquy and opposition they have grappled with some of our deepest social evils, and have carried light and love into some of the darkest recesses of our social system.

“You may condemn their methods and their modes of thought, but to say that they are unpractical and unhuman is to fly in the face of facts.

They approach the social question on a different plane from that of the mere philanthropist or social reformer, and deal with it from a different point of view. But they do approach it, and they do deal with it; and it is worth considering whether a point of view which is able to produce such self-sacrifice and self-devotion as many High Churchmen display, may not, after all, be the right one. Certainly those who declaim against it ought first to show that what they believe to be true is able to infuse a higher spirit and to produce higher results. Until Protestantism or Latitudinarianism or Humanitarianism or any other ism is able to do this; until it is able, for instance, to send numbers of young men from our universities year by year who take it as a matter of course that they should give up many bright worldly prospects, and live and die for the poor and ignorant; until it is able to inspire numbers of cultivated women to cut themselves off from home and friends, and to devote their whole lives to the service of God and His Church; until it is able to breathe the peace of heaven into souls and homes which before it came were desolate and disordered; until

it is able to do all this, and to do it on a much greater scale than High Churchism has done it, then, in all fairness, it should let High Churchism go its way. We do not say that it is not able; we do not claim for the High Church movement a monopoly of God's grace or human devotion. But we do say that the men who are loudest in denouncing that movement, and carrying on agitations against it, are not as a rule the men whose religion will stand such a test. We do not resent the opposition of true men whose deeds correspond to their professions; but we do resent being called to account by those who have never really faced the facts of sin in themselves, and are therefore ignorant of the conditions under which it has to be dealt with in others. We resent it still more when we find our most cherished convictions made the sport of scurrilous street brawlers, and when methods of attack against us are acquiesced in, or, at any rate, not openly repudiated, which ought to be repugnant to every fair-minded man, whatever his convictions may be."

V.

ALL this and much more in a similar strain would at once suggest itself to anyone who wished to write a High Church apologia. That, however, is not my object. My object is rather to examine into the real significance of the apprehensions with which the High Church movement is regarded by a considerable number of earnest-minded churchmen, and to estimate how far such apprehensions represent something tangible and worthy of respect.

The alarm caused by that movement is, then, as I have pointed out, mainly due to its so-called sacerdotal tendencies, and arises from the belief that sacerdotalism, or at any rate sacerdotalism in a developed form, means undue interference with personal freedom and parental or marital authority, and the establishment of a religious type unsuited to the requirements of modern life.

How far is this belief justified? How far apart from misunderstanding and rhetorical exaggeration

tion, and with all due allowance for arguments on the other side, such as I have indicated above, does this dread of sacerdotalism represent something worthy of being taken into account?

It is impossible, I think, to deny that it is justified; not, indeed, up to the measure of alarmist anticipations, but to an extent which calls for the serious recognition of all religious-minded men who are not mere partisans. The spread of sacerdotalism involves dangers which High Churchmen themselves cannot afford to ignore, and against which they ought to see that sufficient safeguards are provided.

For, in the first place, the fear of undue personal or domestic interference on the part of ministers of a strongly sacerdotal system is not an unfounded one. It is true that the ministers of any church which is at all in a healthy and active state, exercise considerable influence—often very great influence—over individual members of their flocks; and that this influence is due, not merely to the personal qualifications of the ministers themselves, but also to some extent to their official position. But the more the sacerdotal

spirit prevails in a church, the more do these personal qualifications tend to be left out of sight, and the more does the claim for influence and guidance tend to be based upon grounds of official authority. It is just here that one great danger of sacerdotalism lies. The very idea of a divinely appointed ministry indeed implies that it is the authorized medium of certain spiritual benefits which are available for us in virtue of that divine appointment and independently of the character of the individual ministers who convey them to us. "The unworthiness of the minister," as our Church puts it, "does not hinder the efficacy of the sacrament." But if this side of the truth alone is dwelt upon, and if, as a consequence, the personal qualifications of ministers come to be regarded as matters of indifference, or at any rate of secondary importance, when compared with their official claims, a door is left open through which some of the worst abuses which have disgraced the history of the Christian Church have crept in.

For the ministerial position then at once becomes a temptation to weak men, or unscrupulous men, who may seek to shelter their own

incompetence or unworthiness behind its prerogatives, and to claim, in virtue of their office, a consideration and an influence which their personal character would not entitle them to.

Here, I believe, is one real point at issue, one chief root of that antipathy and abhorrence which the very word sacerdotalism inspires in many English minds. It is not authority that the best Englishmen resent; not even, perhaps, the assertion of authority in the province of the individual spiritual life; but it is an authority based solely on official position, and not necessarily accompanied with corresponding personal character and power on the part of those who voice its claim. Only the unbalanced and uneducated anticipate the possibility of any widespread recognition of such a claim. It is quite inconceivable that the English race as a whole, with its strong moral sense and its intense love of freedom, or any considerable proportion of that race, should ever allow its conscience to be dominated by a priesthood which was morally or intellectually incompetent. But it is not inconceivable that this might happen in many individual cases, and the mere possibility

of it happening is enough to awaken serious apprehension. Few men who are not stupid egotists will refuse to acknowledge that a priest of high character, of tact, and judgment, and matured experience, may, without danger and often with great spiritual advantage, be allowed to assume a very intimate and influential relationship to individual souls. But the case is very different when this position is claimed as a matter of religious right by someone who, as a man, would have no title to special deference or respect. Such a claim might be ignored and treated with contempt were it not for the fact that its reiterated assertion, supported by the prestige of a venerable system, may at length secure its partial recognition, and that the state of things which is said to exist in some Roman Catholic countries may be established here on perhaps a smaller and more modified, but still on a considerable scale. The word priest, we are told, is for large sections of the male population of those countries almost a synonym for intrigue and interference and intellectual ineptitude; the fear is not altogether an imaginary one that under

certain conditions similar associations should gather round it here.

Then as to the *type* of religious life which High Churchism tends to produce. Are the criticisms to which I have referred utterly untenable, the products of ignorant prejudice, or of materialistic bias?

I don't think that anyone whose ecclesiastical circle of acquaintance is at all a large one can fairly say that they are. High Church religion at the present time can, as a whole, hold its own with any other form of religion in the matter of healthiness and earnestness and practical power; but this statement is not universally true.

What many laymen have before their minds when they speak of a High Churchman or a sacerdotalist is a personification of some very undesirable attributes. They picture to themselves a man of somewhat meagre attainments: feeble in character, though strong in his desire for power; incapable of taking a broad, human view of things; his whole nature bound in a corset of small rules and restrictions; punctilious to a degree with regard to minute details of ritual

and disciplinary observance, but by no means equally punctilious with regard to the requirements of truth and honour and generous dealing; sedulously surrounding himself with an atmosphere of somewhat sickly spiritualism, in which he endeavours to stifle whatever there is in him of human passion and desire, but often only succeeding in perverting natural instincts into morbid and unhealthy channels; a weak creature, in short, whose weakness is ministered to and magnified rather than corrected by the kind of religion which he cultivates and helps to extend.

Of course the picture is a very exaggerated one. All these characteristics are never found in combination, though the mistake is often made of assuming that where some obtrude themselves the others exist as well. But it is impossible to say that approximate specimens of the type described are not to be found in the ranks of the High Church party. It is far from being the prevalent type there; but the fact that it is produced at all, and that it therefore represents a possible product of High Church principles, justifies to some extent

the suspicion with which those principles are often regarded by healthy-minded men.

It would be unreasonable to condemn any system because of the extravagances of some of its adherents. But if a system easily lends itself to such extravagances, it cannot be acquitted of all responsibility for their occurrence. And this seems to be the case, to some extent, in the present instance. High Churchism, with its ornate modes of worship, and its authoritative claims, and its large and varied devotional literature, has a peculiar attraction for the weak and the emotional. Their influence on its development has been up to the present more than neutralized by the fact that its intellectual and historical justification, and its intensely practical spirit, have enlisted the sympathy and support of more vigorous and virile natures. But if the balance is altered; if the weaker and more extravagant type becomes the predominant type; if what is now the exception becomes the rule; if the representative High Churchman of the future is to be a creature of rosaries and ritual fads, of sickly sentiment and overstrained devotion, of bigoted

views and narrow sympathies, of effusive mannerism and irritating self-esteem, unbalanced and unaccountable, at one moment on the heights of hysterical hilarity, at another in the depths of morbid introspectiveness, a creature who combines a weak man's stubbornness and stupidity with a weak woman's love of intrigue and desire for power; if this is what we have to expect as the outcome of the High Church movement—and the race already exists among us and seems to be propagating itself—then that movement deserves all the dislike which it has aroused; nor can its progress be regarded as other than gravely detrimental to the interests of religion in this country. Those interests are intimately bound up with the life of the national Church, and it will be disastrous if that life comes to be dominated by an ideal which strong, earnest men cannot and ought not to sympathize with or accept.

Many High Churchmen, doubtless, will laugh to scorn the attitude of mind which I have attempted to describe; will say that it is a mere product of Protestant prejudice; that a state of things such

as it anticipates never can come about; that though some foolish and effeminate people call themselves High Churchmen, they exercise no real power and are never likely to do so; that among High Churchmen themselves their fads and fooleries are hardly taken seriously, or if taken seriously are discouraged and disliked. But that the best way of dealing with them is to disregard them as much as possible, and to let common sense and public opinion gradually bring them to their bearings; while quite the worst way is to exaggerate their importance and to minister to their self-esteem by treating them as if their eccentricities had a future before them, or as if the great movement to which they are now related as mere excrescences was ever likely to be seriously affected by their influence.

Which point of view is nearest to the truth: that of the Low Churchman who perhaps exaggerates, or that of the High Churchman who perhaps under-estimates, the dangers which the spread of sacerdotal principles involves, I do not pretend to say.

It is, however, sufficiently certain that those

dangers are not purely imaginary ; that they are inherent in the very nature of the case ; and that the fears founded upon anticipations of their occurrence are to no small extent fostered by the puerilities and extravagances of a certain number of professed High Churchmen themselves.

VI.

I HAVE tried to give some account of the position of affairs in the Church of England at the present time; to state as fairly as possible the points of view of the two great parties there; and to trace to their sources the feelings of apprehension and antagonism with which one of those parties regards the general line of thought and action adopted by the other. So far as I have been able to discover, the differences between High Churchmen and Low Churchmen are not so much matters of principle as of proportion. They both, in the main, accept the same premisses and approach the religious question from the same historical and intellectual standpoint. But they differ in the relative importance which they assign to these premisses; and their differences are accentuated under the influence of party feeling and individual or traditional temperament up to a point at which the underlying agreement is obscured, and the whole attention on either side concentrated upon

opinions and practices which, though complementary rather than contradictory, though perfectly capable of being traced to one origin and being reconciled in one common truth, can easily be made to appear antagonistic to each other if treated in isolation from that truth.

Thus the principle of *sacerdotalism* itself, as we have seen, is practically accepted by nearly all churchmen alike; but owing to the fact that some of them lay great stress on its relative importance when compared with other principles, while others place it in a different proportion, the former are called sacerdotalists and the latter anti-sacerdotalists, and the word has become the shibboleth of an embittered and loud-voiced controversy.

The same thing applies to the principle of *sacramental grace*. Nearly all churchmen accept it in some form or another. Our formularies themselves distinctly exclude Zwinglianism, the only Christian theory inconsistent with it. But they differ as to the mode and method by which that grace is conveyed, and as to the importance of the function which the sacraments have to

discharge in the ordered Christian life; and these differences of proportion, or of mere intellectual interpretation, have been so exaggerated, that while some practically confine their teaching to sacramental doctrine, others practically leave it out of account altogether, or relegate it to a position of comparative insignificance.

On *ritual* again—and, strangely enough, much greater stress often seems to be laid on the external clothing of doctrines than on doctrines themselves—all churchmen are agreed so far as the principle of ritual is concerned. They all agree that public worship could not be carried on without a ritual of some kind, and that since to those who accept the fact of a historical Incarnation and of its extension in a visible Church public worship is a necessary and essential part of the Christian life, some kind of ritual must be equally necessary and essential. Moreover, there are probably few churchmen who would not be willing to take a further step, and to acknowledge that the traditional forms in which Christian worship, from a very early age, has almost universally expressed itself, ought to be followed by those

who share in the continuous corporate life which first produced them, in preference to forms of more recent origin; that they have a prior claim on their observance, and should not be altered lightly or except for some very serious reason of edification or expediency. The authority they carry with them, which belongs to them as part of an authoritative system, has indeed only a subordinate claim, and may be disregarded at the call of some higher authority; but still it is quite sufficient to entitle them to great consideration and respect.

Or, descending to a lower plane, most churchmen will agree that ritual may help to no small extent in the development of the individual religious life; that it may be made the means of illustrating and enforcing truth; of disciplining the devotional faculties; of stimulating the emotions, and of directing them into their true channels.

Once more, there seems to be little or no difference as to principle; the difference is as to the proportion in which the principle is to stand, and as to the methods by which it is to be applied. And so it comes about that some are

called ritualists, because they lay great stress upon conformity to the traditional rules in ritual matters, or upon the importance of the part which ritual may play as an educational or emotional influence; while others are given the name of anti-ritualists because, recognizing clearly the danger there is of too great ritual conformity degenerating into formalism, and of too great ritual elaboration ministering to sensuousness or mere artistic appreciation, they emphasize, sometimes perhaps in an exaggerated manner, this other side of the truth about the matter.

Now if the actual condition of opinion in the Church of England at the present time is, in its main outlines at any rate, such as I have attempted to describe; if the differences which divide the Church are in the main differences of tendency and proportion rather than of principle; the feelings of antagonism and apprehension to which those differences have given rise need not alarm us or cause us to form any gloomy anticipations as to their final outcome. They may just now be very acute; they may express themselves in very violent and unseemly ways; but they are not

in their nature permanent. Feelings aroused by the collision of divergent principles can only disappear when people on the one side or the other cease to regard those principles as representing essential truths. But feelings which have their source in differences of tendency and proportion belong to a different category. They are rather of the nature of temporary estrangements, of family quarrels, in which the contending parties are really at heart united, and would, if brought together and made to appreciate each other's point of view, soon recognize this fact, and gradually and instinctively correct anything in their ways of speaking and acting which had hitherto tended to keep them apart.

How can this object best be obtained in the present instance? How can churchmen best be brought together and made to appreciate each other's point of view? What practical steps can be taken in this direction, and on whom does the primary responsibility fall of taking such steps?

These are questions which no earnest churchman can evade. The peace and progress of the Church depends upon some satisfactory answer

being given to them; and no time or trouble spent in furnishing such an answer will be considered too great by those who have the real interests of religion at heart.

Well, one answer, at any rate, is, by the very form of the question, put quite out of court. Whatever method of restoring peace to the Church is right, the method of *high-handed repression* cannot be.

It is advocated we know by a certain number of would-be church reformers, but the tone and manner of their advocacy ought alone to be sufficient to convince us that they either have other ends in view beside that of the welfare of the Church, or that they have never taken the trouble to consider in at all a broad-minded manner what the necessary conditions are upon which that welfare depends.

Few sensible people, however, will have recourse to this method in dealing with any set of opinions or practices; except perhaps in the rare instances in which those opinions or practices can be proved to be directly subversive of the social order. For experience has shown that as a rule persecution has utterly failed in its object, and that even when

it has been apparently successful it has inflicted grave and sometimes irreparable injuries on the State or Church which tried to purge itself of supposed error by its means. If history proves anything, it proves that Gamaliel was perfectly right when he declared in answer to the repressionists of his day: "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to even fight against God." It has taken 1800 years to secure even a partial recognition of the truth of his doctrine; but the best people do recognize it now, and are quite willing, as a rule, to let the opinions of others stand or fall by their own merits; to let them establish their claim by showing their practical value and their theoretical justification, or failing this disappear gradually as things of no account.

This is the general principle, and its application to the present case is, I think, sufficiently obvious. For what would be the result of any attempt to repress by legislative or disciplinary means the more extreme developments of the High Church movement? Its first result would be to enor-

mously strengthen the position of the very people against whom it was directed. They would be regarded by themselves and by those who agree with them as martyrs for a good cause, and would thus both be confirmed in their own convictions, and in their power of impressing those convictions upon others. Moreover, they would at once attract a large amount of outside sympathy and support which they do not at present possess. People who care little or nothing about questions of ritual or doctrine would, in the English way, support them if they thought they were being badly treated; and the great majority of moderate High Churchmen would support them too. This latter is a fact, which people who talk about high-handed methods will do well to lay to heart. The bulk of High Churchmen have no sympathy with extravagant or extreme practices; they regard such practices as dangerous, and often disloyal, and would gladly see those who indulge in them restrained within the limits of sobriety and common sense. But once let this restraint be attempted by way of mob law, or of legislation, or of drastic action on the part of the bishops,

and their attitude would inevitably be changed. They would undoubtedly connive at the continuance of even the most extreme practices, rather than allow them to be suppressed by vulgar rowdyism; it is impossible to conceive of any practicable and effective parliamentary legislation which would not deeply offend their susceptibilities and lead them to make common cause with those against whom it was directed; while "strong action" on the part of bishops would have a similar result, since such action if carried out on any general plan could not fail to affect seriously the work of a great many who are neither extravagant nor extreme.

All these results would be intensified if the repressive policy failed in its immediate object; and experience of former attempts in that direction, whether on the part of the bishops or of Parliament, goes to show that it almost certainly would fail. But even suppose that it was successful up to a certain point; suppose that public opinion would tolerate for long the spectacle of earnest, though perhaps mistaken, men being fined or imprisoned or deprived, or even boycotted or

refused countenance and promotion ; even suppose that by these means a greater uniformity were attained, what would the uniformity be worth? It would plainly only extend to externals ; there are absolutely no means available nowadays for forcing men to think and teach alike. But externals in themselves are matters of indifference ; they are only significant in so far as they express certain convictions ; and if, in the very act of enforcing external conformity, you strengthen these convictions and increase the influence of those who hold them, it is difficult to see what good has been achieved. It is only quackery, not true medical art, to pretend to cure a disease by driving its symptoms from the surface of the body to some more vital part.

Under one condition, and one condition only, would a repressive policy be successful. It would be successful if Parliament so "reformed" the formularies and rubrics of the Church as to make the position of all High Churchmen untenable ; but this condition, I need hardly say, is not likely to be realized.

Comparatively few, however, are in favour of

strong measures of repression, and those who are do not command much attention or respect. Most loyal and sober-minded church people look in a different direction; they seem to think that the Church has resources within herself which, if properly set in motion, are quite capable of correcting the evils of which they complain, and they call loudly on the *bishops*—the natural rulers of the Church—to make use of these resources.

The demand is a perfectly fair one, but it must be remembered that the bishops' power in a matter of this kind is limited. I do not mean that a bishop's power is anything the less because, under the system of the English Church, he has to exercise it by way of moral suasion and personal influence rather than by that of autocratic authority. This characteristic is common to nearly all English institutions, which do not, for that reason, work anything the less efficiently. An English bishop, who is trusted and respected by his clergy, can secure quite as full a measure of their obedience as if he stood in a more despotic relation to them.

Moreover, the bishops, as a rule, command the confidence of the High Church clergy to a far greater extent than they did some years ago. Most of us can remember the time when bishops were regarded by High Churchmen as little better than necessary evils; the natural enemies of all energy and enthusiasm on their particular lines. This is no longer the case. One or two bishops may still pose as pronounced partisans, and in consequence may find themselves confronted with great difficulties in the management of their dioceses. They have only themselves to blame, however, if High Churchmen regard their suggestions with some suspicion, and do not show any great readiness to profit by their advice. But with these exceptions it may be said that the bishops are realizing the necessities of their position, and are becoming alive to the fact that whatever their individual opinions may be their first duty is to be fair and impartial, and to show a sympathetic spirit to all alike. High Churchmen, perhaps, may think that in some instances the process of enlightenment is unnecessarily slow; but they nearly all agree that it is going on, and

as a result are proving themselves every day more submissive to episcopal control. They would not be true to their own principles if they acted otherwise. Nothing less than the belief that they were being treated with gross unfairness and looked upon as little better than ecclesiastical outcasts, could ever have led men who regard episcopal government as a divine institution to show themselves so little amenable to episcopal authority as many High Churchmen have in comparatively recent years.

When I say, then, that a bishop's power is limited, I do not refer to the conditions under which he exercises that power; or to the actual control which he can exercise over his clergy under those conditions. I rather refer to the limit imposed by the character and intelligence of those over whom he has to rule. A bishop may be wise and sympathetic and impartial; he may as a result have gained from his clergy a response, not merely of willingness, but of anxiety to follow his advice and to enter into his point of view. But unless they are able to understand his advice and appreciate his point of view, his influence,

however great, will not ensure conformity to the requirements of sober-minded churchmanship. If those requirements could be formulated in writing; if they could be expressed in rules and rubrics and regulations; the case might be different. But, as we know, the spirit in which doctrines are taught and practices observed is often much more important than the doctrines or practices themselves, and it is in the cultivation of a healthy, broad-minded spirit among his clergy that the power of any bishop is essentially limited by their character and capacity.

This fact is so important and is so often overlooked, that I may be pardoned if I attempt to illustrate its truth in the case of two questions which figure largely in the present controversy—the question of *private confession* and that of *extra services*.

The position of the Church of England with regard to the former question may be taken to be, that though the practice of private confession is allowable in all cases and advisable in some, it ought never to be made a condition for the reception of any sacrament, or presented as a

general counsel of perfection in the Christian life.

But it is obvious that it is quite easy, while formally maintaining this position, to go a great deal beyond it or fall a great deal below it in practice. It is quite easy, for instance, while theoretically admitting that private confession is optional to practically make it compulsory, at any rate in the case of the more sensitive and conscientious. It is equally easy, while theoretically admitting that it may be useful in some cases, to practically reduce the number of such cases to a vanishing point. The Church's rule is that anyone who cannot quiet his conscience by self-examination and prayer to God ought, before coming to the Lord's table, to open his grief to a priest and receive from him absolution. But on the one side it is only necessary to emphasize the danger of imagining that the conscience is quieted when it is only lulled to sleep, and the importance of using every means available to safeguard oneself against this danger, in order to make recourse to a priest practically a matter of necessary obligation; while on the other side it is only necessary to ignore the

practice in one's teaching, or never to refer to it except in a cursory and superficial manner, and at the same time to provide no easy opportunities for its use, in order to practically exclude it altogether for the ordinary resources of the Christian life.

How is a bishop to correct such errors of excess or defect? He is being loudly called upon to do so : how is he to proceed ?

Plainly, the matter is one which admits of no hard and fast rules and regulations. The ideal which the Church aims at is a high one. She seeks on the one side to avoid the dangers which experience has shown that a system of habitual confession may involve ; the danger of turning what ought to be the most searching exercise of the devotional life into a merely formal practice ; the danger of diminishing the sense of personal responsibility and of cramping the free development of character ; and the danger of making the entrance to full church membership unnecessarily difficult to people of certain temperaments by insisting upon conditions which they shrink from fulfilling. She seeks on the other side to place within the easy reach of her children a means of

grace which some have found invaluable in the struggle for their souls, and without the help of which they might have had to carry on that struggle against overwhelming odds.

But this ideal, just because it is a high one, just because it is founded on a large and comprehensive view of the wants and weaknesses of human nature, is hard to realize. It can only be realized, even approximately, by those who share in the spirit which inspires it and who appreciate the considerations which underlie it. A bishop may do his best by public statement, by private counsel, by personal influence, to foster that spirit, and to call attention to those considerations. But the success of his efforts plainly depends on the material with which he has to deal. If his clergy are men who are capable of seeing two sides to a question and balancing one side against the other, he may, with the aid of a little tact and sympathy and forbearance, lead them to correct their deficiencies and to remedy their mistakes. But if they are men of narrow sympathies and limited capacities; men who cannot without mental and moral

confusion leave the beaten track of a stereotyped system; he can do little with them. He may have gained their personal affection and respect; they may be quite willing to defer to his judgment and to follow his advice; but he can never expect to get more from them than external conformity to his wishes. Moreover, it is doubtful whether such conformity is itself desirable. Narrow and one-sided methods are often the only methods possible for narrow and one-sided natures; if they try to broaden out they often lose their practical power; and a bishop, brought face to face with the alternatives of allowing work to proceed on lines of which he does not altogether approve, or of imposing restrictions upon it, which, while crippling its effectiveness, will do little to improve its quality, may often prefer to choose the former, and refrain from interference of any kind.

Much the same considerations apply to the other question to which I have referred—that of *extra services*. How far such services are or are not strictly permissible under the terms of the Act of Uniformity is a matter which may be left to legal experts to decide. Their decision, how-

ever, is of little practical importance. For such services have taken their place as a regular part of the practical system of nearly every parish in which active work is going on. To quibble about their formal legality or illegality is mere pedantry ; to try and insist that the requirements of public worship at the present time should be limited by arrangements made in the sixteenth century is like trying to insist that a growing lad should never get a new suit of clothes or have his old ones enlarged ; to charge individual clergymen who go outside those arrangements with disloyalty, and to threaten them with penalties or deprivation for doing so, is about as reasonable as it would be to censure the same lad for growing, or to threaten to tie up or to amputate those parts of his body which were becoming inconveniently large. An ideal of uniformity found quite impracticable even in the age which produced it, and only maintained from motives of political expediency, is plainly inapplicable to times like our own, when those motives no longer exist, and when men's lives and experiences and ways of acting and thinking are so much more varied than they

were then. A Church which is in touch with people's religious wants must adapt its methods to those wants, or run the risk of driving them to seek elsewhere for their satisfaction.

These are mere common-sense truisms ; and the practical deductions from them have been for the most part acquiesced in as matters of course. There are very few active clergymen of any school of thought who do not use their churches from time to time for children's services, or flower services, or Preparation services, or services of other special kinds and for other special occasions which would be sought for in vain within the limits of the Book of Common Prayer. And they might have continued to do so with impunity had it not been for the fact that in a small number of instances these extra services seem to have been copied directly from those in use in the Roman Church. It is to this fact that we must look for an explanation of the feeling which the question has aroused, and the position it has been given in the present controversy. A clergyman may indulge in extravagant forms of revivalism ; he may have oratorios performed, or art lectures

delivered in his church ; and though his action may be criticized it will meet with little real opposition. But let him borrow his ideas from a different source, and mould his extra services on a Roman Catholic or mediæval model, and at once a "no-popery" cry is raised, violent speeches are made, riotous scenes take place, strong measures are called for, and the bishops are loudly denounced for not taking these measures at once and with a high hand.

What are the bishops to do? Are they to yield to mob-clamour and make themselves the instruments of a party propaganda? On what principle would they be justified in doing so? Certainly not on any principle of fairness and equitable dealing. If extra services are allowed at all, there is no reason why a distinction should be made between those borrowed from Roman Catholic and those borrowed from other sources ; and such a distinction is especially irrelevant in a church whose authorized forms of worship can be traced to a common origin with those of the Roman Catholic Church, and are in many respects very similar to them. Of course the answer is

that exception is taken to the services in question, not because Roman Catholics use them, but because they are out of harmony with the general spirit of English religion, and tend to breed superstition and idolatry. But the bishops, before they proceed to take action, may fairly ask for some proofs of this assertion. Before we can say that this or that service is out of harmony with the spirit of English religion, we must be able to describe the essential characteristics of that spirit; before we say that it tends to superstition and idolatry, we must be able to define those words, and show in what the tendency consists. This will be found, on trial, no easy task. The spirit of English religion is as multiform as the characters and dispositions of those who profess it; and the fact that a service of any kind satisfies the devotional needs of a certain number of English people is in itself some proof that it is not altogether out of harmony with that spirit. By superstition is generally meant the dissociation of religious feeling from moral conduct, and the cultivation of the former apart from or even at the expense of the latter. But this danger is

common to all forms of religious worship and belief, and it remains to be proved that Roman Catholic forms, if adopted by people of vigorous natures and strong moral sense, would lend themselves to such abuses in any conspicuous degree. As to the charge of idolatry, it is difficult to deal with it because it is difficult to understand it. It is often made, and with great glibness, but no adequate explanation of its meaning has hitherto been forthcoming. To the ordinary person an act of idolatry is not merely impossible but inconceivable. There may doubtless be a danger in the excessive use of symbolical aids to the religious imagination; but most English people, at any rate, will find it difficult even to picture to themselves a state of mind in which the temptation could arise of worshipping the religious symbols themselves apart from what they represent.

With regard to the question of extra services, then, the problem with which bishops have to deal seems to be something of this kind. A large number of such services are already in use, and their number is likely to be increased as time goes on. Though it would be unwise to check this

tendency, which is a natural outcome of the development of corporate and devotional activity in the Church, it is a bishop's duty to try and regulate it, and to direct it into healthy and sober channels.

He cannot, however, carry out the duty by any rough and ready method. He can insist, and most bishops, I believe, have insisted, that any additional service before being used should be submitted to him for approval, and he can withhold his approval when anything in it is, directly or by implication, inconsistent with the doctrinal standards of the Church.

The case of such services demands some special consideration. Churches in which they are used or desired are very exceptional: but they exist, and they have caused irritation out of all proportion to their number or importance. This is not to be wondered at. The resentment produced by the introduction of services like Benediction, or the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin, or Requiem masses, embodying the Roman doctrine of purgatory, is not due solely to anti-Roman feeling. It is due also to the fact that it seems impossible to reconcile such action on the part of certain of

the clergy with the principles of intellectual honesty. The formularies of our Church are capable of very liberal interpretation: they were made at a time when great diversity of opinion existed among churchmen, and were intended to allow for this diversity within certain limits. But those limits are undoubtedly overstepped when doctrines and practices openly and distinctly repudiated by them are taught and observed. Of course it is possible, by clever manipulation, to make words mean nearly anything. But a line of doctrinal and devotional development which finds no countenance in the writings of any of the great Anglican Divines, and which can only be justified by a system of forced and unnatural interpretation, cannot fail to come into collision with the judgment of the ordinary conscience. Loyalty and straightforward dealing belong to the very essence of all true religion; and a religious cult which starts by ignoring or by trifling with them, however admirable it may be in other respects, however great the zeal and earnestness and devotion of its exponents and adherents, is vitiated at its source, and is bound to prove its

own nemesis. The Reformation may or may not have been a good thing: the English Reformers may or may not have been justified in their rejection of certain Romish teachings. But the Reformation is a historical fact which cannot be ignored; the limitations imposed then are embodied in our authoritative standards; and every priest who has taken orders in the English Church has promised to recognize them. That promise he is bound to keep: he cannot ignore it, or shuffle himself out of it, without incurring the stigma of disloyalty and dishonourable dealing.

But while all this must be said, and said emphatically, it does not by any means follow that the handful of churchmen who have got into the way of speaking slightly of the Reformation settlement, or of ignoring the obligations which it entails, are consciously trifling with their sense of truth and falsehood. Most Englishmen, as I have already said, pay but slight regard to authority in matters of religion, and the necessity of its clear recognition is only gradually reasserting itself. It is not unnatural, then, that the same tendency to individualism which has led some to approximate

their religion to that of Protestant Dissent should have led others in the opposite direction. In both cases alike practices and doctrines have been adopted because they happened to fit in with the personal predilections of those who adopted them : and the question of their consistency with the Church's point of view has probably hardly been raised. The extreme Low Churchman who thunders forth the doctrines of "free grace," as he calls them, and the extreme High Churchman who includes Mariolatry and saint-worship in his devotional practices, are really at one in principle. They are both of them religious individualists : they both of them set out with certain personal wants, and proceed to evolve or to adopt whatever religious system seems to them most likely to afford satisfaction to those wants. Of course they would both indignantly deny this charge. The Low Churchman would point to the Bible for his authority : the High Churchman to the Universal Church. But they both alike ignore the fact that they are not at liberty to give whatever interpretation they choose to the teaching either of the Bible or the Universal Church : that

as English Churchmen they are bound by the interpretation which the English Church has given, and that so long as they remain English Churchmen they have no right whatever to ignore that interpretation, or to stray beyond it in this direction or that.

This is one circumstance which has to be taken into account in estimating the doctrinal aberrations of some "extreme" churchmen. We have all of us been brought up in a religious atmosphere steeped through and through with individualism, and these extremists are merely developing in a somewhat unpopular manner the principles of religious judgment which the great majority of Englishmen at present act upon to a greater or less extent.

It is a little hard, then, if they alone should have to face the charge of disloyalty and dishonesty, a charge which would hold equally good against every churchman who ignores or explains away the Church's authority when it happens to clash with his personal notions of what is fitting and right; and the number of such churchmen, as we know, is legion.

The fact that one set of people act in a wrong way does not, of course, justify others in doing so, but it ought to mitigate the asperity with which the former regard the conduct of the latter, and make them more charitable in the censures they pass upon it. Ultra-Protestantism, whether of the Ritualistic or of any other form, is inconsistent with loyal churchmanship, but we are all more or less affected by its spirit, and we have no right to assume any special moral depravity on the part of those who arrive at conclusions which happen to be disagreeable to us by logical methods which we both in common use.

And then there is a further consideration which must be borne in mind. We must remember what the history of the High Church movement has been during the last fifty years; we must remember how bitterly the revival of practices and doctrines which are now accepted as at any rate legitimate was at first opposed, and how those who were responsible for their revival were at first assailed with similar accusations of disloyalty and dishonesty.

Nor was it only an opposition of unreasoning

prejudice of which High Churchmen complain. Most of them believe that their position has been assailed by much the same methods which the extremists are now accused of using to defend their practices. They believe that many of the legal decisions which have been obtained against them have been decisions of expediency rather than of law, and that their ostensible grounds were of the nature of special pleadings for foregone conclusions. I don't say that they are justified in their belief, though the recent reversal of some of these decisions in the Lincoln Judgment seems to show that they have some grounds for it, and many people who are not High Churchmen have never yet been able to understand the process by which the Ornaments Rubric was made to forbid that which it plainly orders. But whether they are justified or not, we have to face the fact that the majority of High Churchmen are firmly convinced that they have been dealt with unfairly and inequitably in times gone by, and that even at the present time their claims would not always be treated with justice and impartiality. Is it any wonder, then, that men who have been brought up in the

tradition of such supposed experiences should be little sensitive to outside criticism, and should occasionally allow their zeal to carry them beyond the line which separates legitimate development from illegitimate accretion?

The handful of clergy, then, who have been accustomed to dabble in Romish practices, and they are after all only a meagre handful, need not be treated as very heinous offenders. Their dabbling tendency is absolutely indefensible; that must be clearly understood. It cannot be reconciled with any principle of loyalty and truth; but it is the outcome of circumstances rather than of any special moral obliquity. The men themselves are much as other men are. Many of them are young men who like to be thought eccentric or extreme; harmless though withal when sufficiently suppressed. Others have incorporated stray bits of Romanism in their teaching and ritual almost at haphazard, and without quite knowing why. Some few again, attracted by the apparent logical completeness of the Roman system of practical theology, have steeped themselves in the teaching of its handbooks, and have thus lost touch with Anglican modes of thought

and feeling. But with a negligible number of exceptions they are true men, who would soon fall into line once it was brought home to them that they had, however unintentionally, offended against principles of consistency and truth. The bishops can without any great difficulty do this if they set about it in the right way. It may require time and patience; Englishmen are not easily got out of ways to which they have been accustomed, even when those ways are plainly indefensible. But with the aid of a little tact and forbearance and sympathy, with, above all, the fact made plain that they are acting on their own initiative as the supreme officers of the Church, and not as the mouthpieces of a party or a mob, there is no reason why the bishops should find the task beyond them. It must of course be done. The English Church has her own distinctive teachings and traditions, and it is the first duty of her ministers to be loyal to them. There can be no hesitation on this point; truth and straightforward dealing must at all hazards be maintained. But there are two ways of doing everything, and taking all the circumstances of the case into account, there can

be no doubt, I think, that the way I have tried to indicate is the right way.

So far a bishop's course is comparatively clear, but at the next step it is far from being so. For apart from services which should be rejected on doctrinal grounds, there are others which he may hesitate before sanctioning. The fact that some of them are likely to rouse a certain amount of mob opposition is not conclusive against their use. Such opposition is, for the most part, nothing more than a manifestation of the most intolerable of all forms of intolerance—the intolerance which declares that “I don't like so-and-so, therefore you shall not have it.” Still the consideration of expediency has to be taken into account; the consideration whether it is worth while to do anything which some people, however unreasonably, are likely to take offence at; provided it is balanced by the clear recognition of the fact that if the principle of expediency alone had been acted on in days gone by Christianity itself would not now exist.

But putting the question of expediency or in-expediency aside; a more serious difficulty arises

from the fact that a service which might under some conditions be harmless and helpful, under other conditions might be just the reverse. The bishop has to take cognizance of this fact, and to consider not merely whether this or that service is good in itself, but whether in the circumstances of the particular parish in which its use is desired it is likely to promote sober and healthy religious life or to minister to morbidity or eccentricity.

Here, then, the bishop's influence and power for good is limited in exactly the same way as in the case of private confession. It is limited by the character and the capacity of his clergy. If the clergyman who wishes to use the service in question in his church is a wise, healthy-minded man, he may perhaps be permitted to do so without misgiving. If he does not possess these qualifications, the bishop has to decide whether he will do more harm by granting him permission and thus apparently sanctioning a religious temper of which he does not approve; or by refusing his permission and thus crippling a line of work which, with all its aberrations and shortcomings, is productive on the whole of good results.

VII.

THESE are only two examples of the difficulties which the bishops have to encounter in their efforts to restore peace and order to the Church. I have dwelt upon them at some length because it is well to bring home to people's minds how considerable those difficulties are and how delicate the task is which they are being called to accomplish. Such examples might be multiplied indefinitely, but I believe that they would all bring us face to face with the same root question—the question of clerical character and capacity. Just so far as parochial affairs, or at any rate the affairs of the more prominent and influential parishes, are directed by competent men, will the development of the Church's life proceed on sober and well-considered lines; just so far as they fall into the hands of incompetent men, is the even flow of that development liable to be interrupted by objectionable practices, and the controversies and contentions which such practices must inevitably cause.

This, I believe, is the question of questions for churchmen at the present time ; and if our Church reformers and our belligerent controversialists would devote their energies to considering how a high standard of clerical efficiency can best be attained and maintained, they would do much more to advance the cause which they profess to have at heart than by the most vehement ventilation of their theories and their grievances.

It is, of course, a large question, but our present difficulties are not surface ones, and no method of dealing with them can be satisfactory which does not begin by tracing them to their source.

That source, I have no hesitation in saying, is the apathy and indifference of the great majority of church laymen. The character of the clergy is a matter of demand and supply. If the laity choose to demand clergymen of a certain type, and to demand them "effectively," they can get them ; if they do not choose to demand them, they have only themselves to blame for whatever troubles may arise from their neglect. It is impossible to place the responsibility on any other shoulders. The clergy are what they are ;

and, starting with certain endowments, they cannot, with the best will in the world, raise themselves to a much higher level. The bishops may do their best, but their power, as I have pointed out, is limited by the materials with which they have to deal. It is for the laity to provide them with the proper materials, and unless they make greater efforts in this direction than they have done in past years, or are even now doing, many of the evils of which they complain are bound to continue or even to become accentuated.

This is no unfounded anticipation. It is a notorious fact that year by year the standard of candidates for ordination is steadily deteriorating; that year by year fewer university graduates seek ordination, and that the proportion of graduate candidates who have acquitted themselves creditably in their university career is becoming less and less. Let it be granted that the majority of clergymen to-day are more zealous and active and self-denying than were the clergymen of fifty years ago. This is undoubtedly a matter for thankfulness; but it must be remembered that zeal and activity and self-denial will

not do everything; that combined with limited experience and sympathy and capacity, they are more than likely to lead to unbalanced action and misguided practices, to narrow methods and bigoted views, to just those tendencies, in short, from which the present troubles in the Church have sprung, and the development of which, on an extended scale, no far-seeing churchman can anticipate without alarm. Once let the process of deterioration reach a certain point; once let it become necessary—and it is already necessary to a limited extent—to fill positions of influence and importance in the Church with men of inferior mental and moral calibre; and no earnestness and enthusiasm on their part, no influence which the bishops can exert, no paper theories or academic reforms can prevent the current of church life in this country from gradually contracting itself into narrow and tortuous channels. The majority of the clergy may call themselves High Churchmen, or Low Churchmen, or Broad Churchmen, or what they like; they may accentuate the Protestant view, or the Catholic view, or the liberal view of the Christian faith; but the net result

will be the same. So far as their influence on church life is concerned—and this influence must, from their very position, be a potent one—that life will tend more and more to become divorced from the broader interests of the national life; to become at best a negligible factor in it, at worst something discordant with it—a source of social weakness and disunion rather than of inspiration and strength.

This, I believe, is the root danger in the present condition of the Church of England; the main source of most of the difficulties with which churchmen have to deal, and one which threatens to produce greater evils still. The laity of the Church, and they alone, can furnish adequate safeguards against it, and they can do so in two main ways: they can do so by providing a sufficient supply of well-qualified candidates for ordination; and they can do so by helping to educate those who have been ordained.

Laymen, in criticizing the clergy, are often inclined to speak of them as if they constituted an hereditary or imported caste, over the character of which they have no control. In reality their

criticisms rebound upon themselves. For the clergy of the Church of England are merely laymen who have been appointed to perform certain very important and very sacred functions; and if the best sort of laymen are not appointed, it is because the best sort of laymen are not forthcoming for this purpose. Before a layman, therefore, is justified in making a grievance of the fact that such and such a clergyman is below the level of his congregation in education or experience, he ought to ask himself how far he himself and others like him are responsible for this fact. If he has a son, for instance, of exceptional ability and character, has he done his best to encourage him to take Holy Orders? Or has he done anything to make it easier for other people to influence their sons in this direction? One way in which he can do so is very obvious. The reason why many parents discourage their sons from becoming clergymen, unless they are unlikely to succeed in any other walk of life, is because the clerical profession, looked at as a profession, holds out such meagre prospects. This fact is not without its advantages, since

it provides some guarantee that men of ability who do take Holy Orders are actuated by disinterested motives. But there is a point at which its advantages are more than counter-balanced by its disadvantages, and that point has undoubtedly been reached in the English Church. The pecuniary condition of most English clergymen at the present time is absurdly inadequate: and were it not that motives of a traditional and social and religious character play their part in inducing men of ability to take Holy Orders, the competition of commercial and professional pursuits would leave the clerical profession little chance of attracting any considerable number of such men to its ranks. Putting the unbeneficed clergy out of the question, there are comparatively few benefices in which a married clergyman can live in even moderate comfort on his clerical income; while those which will enable him to give his children a good education are rare exceptions. Some of the higher positions in the Church indeed carry with them considerable emoluments, but even in these cases the nominal income is nearly always far in excess of that

actually received when all necessary outgoings are taken into account.

Speaking generally, then, anyone who thinks of taking Holy Orders has to face the fact that if he does so the probabilities are that he will never be able to do more than to get a subsistence for himself, and that not always a very sufficient one. Of course this fact will not deter a man who feels that he is called by God to the work of the ministry; nor will it deter parents who recognize the duty of dedicating to God's service their best and most treasured possessions. But such considerations, however true in themselves, are quite irrelevant when urged by an ordinary layman. He has no right to ask others to make great sacrifices for him, especially when those sacrifices are rendered necessary by his own selfishness or neglect; nor has he any right to complain if others refuse to do on a large scale what he himself refuses to do even in a minor degree.

English people pride themselves on being able to take a practical common-sense view of things. But is it in keeping with this character to expect that an average parent will encourage his son,

who, if he goes into trade or into one of the professions, has every prospect of making a competence or even a fortune, to turn aside from these more lucrative lines of life and to enter upon a career in which, unless he is exceptionally fortunate, he can never expect to be able to bring up his children as he has been brought up himself?

This is not a matter which concerns the existing race of clergy to any great extent; they have undertaken the service of the Church for better or for worse, and for the most part they have shown themselves ready to face in uncomplaining silence whatever hardships that service entails.

But it is one which intimately concerns the question of the future supply of the clergy. An ill-paid clergy means on the average an uneducated clergy; an inefficient, narrow-minded clergy; a clergy hypersensitive to its social importance; a clergy dominated by a spirit of spurious sacerdotalism. This will inevitably be the case, for the simple reason that the best and cleverest boys will be discouraged by their parents from taking Holy Orders, and the chief positions in the Church; the positions which mould the character of church

life as a whole, will have to be given to men of second-rate training and abilities; to men who will be sorely tempted to make up for their lack of personal power by over-assertion of their official authority.

It is a fact which cannot be too strongly emphasized or too strongly impressed on the minds of English churchmen at the present time. If instead of criticizing and complaining and agitating and anathematizing, people would quietly attack our church troubles at their source, and in a sober, self-denying spirit remove one of the chief impediments to their cure, they would advance the real interests of the Church far more effectively than by pushing forward any paper scheme of repression or reform.

But it is not only by providing, or by making it easier for others to provide, a sufficient supply of capable candidates for ordination that laymen can help in raising the standard of clerical efficiency; they can also help in doing so by educating those who have been ordained.

It is a mistake to suppose that a clergyman's education has been completed when he has passed through a university and a theological college, and

has satisfied the bishop's examining chaplains. The most important part of his education begins just at that point. It begins in his first curacy, and is carried on during the earlier years of his clerical career; during the years while he is still impressionable and able to learn readily from experience; while he is forming his methods and his point of view and his general estimate of men and things. He learns something, perhaps, from his vicar, but he learns a great deal more from the people with whom he comes into contact from day to day. He draws his own conclusions from what they say and what they do, and often generalizes from these conclusions to the world of men at large.

It makes an enormous difference to him what kind of people they are; whether he has mainly to depend for his social and spiritual companionship on people of the well-meaning but somewhat feeble type which is often so much in evidence in parochial life; or whether the stronger and abler sort of religious-minded men and women recognize that he has a distinct claim upon them; that they are to some extent responsible for his training: and that therefore instead of treating him as a

kind of amiable appendage: a mere service-singing and muffin-munching nonentity: they ought to take trouble with him, and give him of their best in the way of sympathy and tactful advice.

A great deal is said nowadays about the rights of the laity and the need for asserting them more strongly. As a matter of fact, in the great majority of parishes the laity have all the rights they could desire if they would only use them in the proper way. A layman has only to take an active and unselfish interest in church work; to show a sympathetic and loyal spirit; to exercise a little tact and prudence and self-restraint; to be a true churchman in short; in order to gain influence, often preponderating influence, in the direction of church affairs. A body of such laymen in any parish, working together, soon form an atmosphere of religious thought and a tradition of religious action which no clergyman can afford to disregard; which none but the strongest can fight against; and which cannot but have an enormously powerful determining influence on the character of one who is brought into intimate contact with it during the earlier stages of his ministerial life.

VIII.

NOW to sum up. I have tried to give some account of the character and causes of the unrest which at present exists in the Church. That unrest, so far as I have been able to discover, is not a symptom of any exceptional or critical state of things, but is the outcome of tendencies which have always existed in the Church's life, and which certain special and transient circumstances have brought to the surface, and accentuated in a somewhat aggravated form. It arises chiefly from misunderstanding; from the fact that the two great historic parties in the Church, in their eagerness to apply the particular truths to which they themselves attach importance, have been inclined to forget the underlying unity which connects those truths, to state them and to apply them in isolation, and as a result to lose their sense of the proportion in which they ought to stand to each other, and to the whole body of religious truth; to present as contradictory

what is only complementary, and to find grounds of difference and dissension in a play of mental and moral forces which ought to make for enlightenment and wide-mindedness. Unrest of this character can only be permanently cured when its causes are removed, and that will only be when men on either side come to recognize more fully the duty of rising to a higher level; of looking all around them; of taking all the facts which bear on any particular question into account, and of drawing their conclusions from a well-balanced consideration of those facts.

Thus we are brought face to face with the prime condition of true peace and healthy progress in the Church—the condition that those who express its spirit and direct its organized apparatus should be true men; men of character and capacity and sympathy and power; men who will not allow themselves to be made the tools of a faction, or to neglect the common good for the sake of some partial and passing advantage.

It is such men that we need in every position in the Church, or at any rate in every position of prominence and power; and I further pointed

out that for whatever lack of such men exists, the laity of the Church must be held primarily responsible; that they can if they will raise the standard of clerical efficiency to the necessary point; that those who are parents can do so by dedicating the ablest of their sons to the service of the Church; that those who are rich can do so by making the pecuniary conditions of a clerical career less onerous and unsatisfactory; and that all alike can do so by doing their duty as churchmen in that state of life to which God has called them, and thus gradually forming a strong healthy current of church sentiment and aspiration which the abler clergy would gradually assimilate and express, and the less efficient could do little to disturb.

Let the laity do their duty by the Church, and the Church will do its duty by them. That to my mind is the net conclusion of the matter; the only true and adequate solution of our present difficulties.

It is not a solution which promises any immediate or sensational results; but this fact will not hinder its acceptance by those who recognize the real conditions of the problem with which

they have to deal. For the Church of England is no mushroom growth of yesterday, whose lines of organized action can be summarily altered to suit each passing popular prejudice. She carries with her a great historic tradition. Her life and English national life have been intimately interwoven since the English nation first began to exist. It was on her institutions that our political and social institutions were first moulded, and they in turn have been affected to no small extent by the development of the secular system which they helped to create. Secular life and ecclesiastical life have thus gone hand in hand for well nigh 1500 years; they have acted and re-acted on each other; they have reflected each other's idiosyncrasies; they have imbibed each other's spirit. They both of them embody the same inconsistencies of thought and action, of theory and practice; but they both of them display the same strong, practical common sense which enables them, in the long run, to arrive at right conclusions, though the professed premisses from which they start are often inadequate or even flagrantly false.

Such is the Church of England: a great organic growth whose characteristics can only be understood in the context of that growth, and whose deficiencies can only be dealt with when that context has been taken into account. Those who think to cure this or that evil of which they complain by some surface rearrangement, will only succeed in aggravating it by concentrating its causes and giving them greater power. It is the causes themselves which have to be dealt with before any good result can be attained; and the deeper those causes are, the more gradual and far-reaching must be the method of treatment which they require.

This is the true point of view, I believe, from which to approach the controversies of the present day. They are no novel things in the history of the English Church. She has passed through others in times gone by far more acute than any which are likely to arise under the conditions of modern life, and she has emerged from them not merely with her vitality unimpaired, but with her experiences deepened and her sympathies enlarged. For one chief result

of every such controversy has been to convince all fair-minded men that neither side had a monopoly of the truth; that there is something to be said on both sides of most questions; and that much vexatious heat and bitterness might have been saved if this fact had been recognized from the first, and if, instead of declaiming angrily against each other, men had tried to see exactly what the differences which divided them were, and how far, without any surrender of principle, those differences could be resolved.

The present controversy will, we hope, render a similar service to the cause of truth; and if what I have said is true, it may render a greater service still. For it may help to call the attention of laymen to the fact that the key of the position is in their hands; that the future welfare of the English Church depends largely on the efforts which they choose to make; that if she is to fulfil her appointed task, they must do their duty by her, and that that duty does not consist in criticizing this or that detail of ritual, or in nagging at this or that clergyman, or in formulating fantastic schemes, or in making blatant speeches

on public platforms, or in writing violent letters to the newspapers. But that it consists in loyal and sympathetic co-operation with good work, wherever good work is being done; it consists in an intelligent appreciation of the Church's history and teaching; it consists in living humble, holy, self-denying lives; and it consists last but not perhaps least in seeing that those who minister to them in spiritual things are fully qualified for the sacred duties which they have to perform, and that they shall not be hampered in their performance by constant care and anxiety about temporal things.

APPENDIX

A SERMON PREACHED IN KIDDERMINSTER PARISH
CHURCH ON BEHALF OF THE CURATES FUND*

THE collections to-day are for the Curates Fund of this parish, and I have been asked to call your attention to the claim which that fund has on your generous and extended support.

It is not a very easy duty to discharge, and I confess that I have undertaken it with some diffidence. Asking for money under any circumstances or for any object is never a very agreeable task, nor is it one for which I have either aptitude or liking. In my own parish the people, rich and poor alike, have generally responded most liberally to any charitable appeal, and have generally been ready to support any object to the full extent of their capacities, provided they were convinced that it was a good object and worthy of their support. Such surroundings give one little chance of

* This sermon is inserted here for the sake of the facts with which it deals. They supply a useful concrete illustration of the actual conditions under which the Church's work is carried on in many important parishes, conditions which will have to be materially improved if church life in this country is to rise to anything like the true level of its possibilities. (Cp. Preface.)

cultivating the art of pulpit mendicancy. They rather predispose one to assume that all English people are similarly constituted; that they are naturally generous and open-handed; that they recognize the duty of regular almsgiving, and only need to be assured of the character of the object on which their alms are to be bestowed.

Well, I believe that the assumption holds good, at any rate for the people of Kidderminster. This stately church itself bears witness to its truth. For years to come its splendidly restored fabric will stand as a visible proof of a civic spirit which finds its fit expression in acts of magnificent generosity. It is to this spirit (and it is impossible to believe that it is confined to any individual or class) that it is a preacher's duty to appeal on an occasion like the present.

This makes the duty less disagreeable but hardly less difficult. If one had merely to do with general principles; had merely to point out the necessary connection which must exist between Christian profession and Christian practice of this kind, the argument would be simple enough. The New Testament itself supplies abundant material for such a purpose. Nothing can be plainer than the attitude of our Lord or His disciples with regard to this question. Only a false spiritualism, springing from selfish stupidity, can blind our eyes to the fact that self-denying almsgiving is of the very essence of the Christian life; that it is no more possible to live the life of the kingdom of heaven without it than

without prayer, or faith, or love to God. It is not by how we have felt, but by what we have done, that we shall be judged at the last day. The question then will not be whether we have called "Lord, Lord," with apparent fervour; but whether we have clothed the naked, fed the hungry, and visited the widow and fatherless in their affliction. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works," says St. James. "Charge them that are rich in this present world . . . that they be ready to distribute, . . . laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed," says St. Paul; and they are only echoing their Master's reiterated words when He taught His disciples to "make friends to themselves by means of the mammon of unrighteousness," or when He told the rich young man that if he would be perfect he must go and sell all that he had and give to the poor; or when He promised that those who gave up home and lands for His sake and the Gospel's shall receive an hundredfold in this time, and in the world to come eternal life.

Doubtless there are some in every congregation who need reminding, and reminding forcibly, of these elementary truths; some of the close-fisted confraternity, who seem to think that it is possible to combine Christianity with selfishness, and overreach God as they might overreach one of their fellow-men.

But it is not to them that I wish to speak ; for my function this morning is not to call attention to an obvious and unmistakable duty ; but, assuming, as I feel confident I have a right to assume, that the great majority whom I am addressing recognize that duty, and are trying to discharge it adequately, to try and show that the object for which I plead is one which has special claims at the present time on your sympathy and strenuous support.

But how is this to be done? There is the difficulty. Probably many of you have already to meet considerable charitable claims, and in the case of some, at any rate, any extra effort on behalf of the object brought before you this morning may mean a corresponding diminution in the sums you can subscribe in other ways. This would only be justified on condition that the present object is one of very special urgency and importance. I believe that it is. I believe that its claim ought to stand almost first in the mind of every earnest churchman. But it is not easy for a clergyman to accentuate the reasons for this belief. For in doing so he is easily exposed to the charge of being biassed by personal predilections ; of seeing things through the spectacles of his own order ; and of laying too much stress on the importance of the functions which that order has to discharge.

A layman would be a much more effective advocate on an occasion of this kind than any clergyman could

be ; but as laymen are at present not available for pulpit purposes, and as the matter is one which involves considerations of the utmost importance for the well-being and progress of Christianity, not merely in this parish but through the length and breadth of England, it would be cowardly to refuse to undertake a duty merely because it is a difficult one, and because I feel myself utterly unfitted to discharge it adequately.

One thing I can do, however. I cannot help being a clergyman, but I can try to forget for the moment that I am one ; can try to assume a layman's point of view ; and, throwing all class considerations and personal prejudices aside, can endeavour to estimate the matter as he would estimate it.

That will be my endeavour this morning. Instead of preaching a formal sermon, I want to try and state, as plainly as I can, two or three simple common-sense reasons which would, I think, justify any intelligent and earnest layman in placing the claims of an adequate system of clerical sustentation in the forefront of his charitable consideration.

I shall begin, then, by assuming two things : (1) that an ordained ministry is of the very essence of the Christian Church, and (2) that it is the duty of the members of the Church to maintain that ministry.

Neither proposition, as we know, is universally accepted ; but I am speaking now from the Church's point of view, and as to that point of view there can be

no doubt. Our Church undoubtedly regards an ordained ministry as of the very essence of her constitution, the necessary medium of discipline and teaching and sacramental grace; and she also insists that the ministry shall be supported from ecclesiastical sources, even making it illegal for a clergyman to engage in avocations of a directly secular kind.

The really practical questions, then, which a churchman has to face, are not whether there should be a ministry or whether it should be supported; but *what kind* of ministry is needed, and *how* it should be supported.

Now, as to the first of these questions, I believe that most earnest churchmen are agreed. I believe that everyone who is really in sympathy with the Church's work will agree that very few town parishes, at any rate, are overstaffed; while many are miserably understaffed.

Population in this country is increasing by leaps and bounds, and, side by side with that increase, a great awakening of church life has taken place within the last fifty years. The state of things which existed in the early part of this century would not be tolerated by public opinion now. A parish like your own, which at that time a vicar would have considered himself justified in working with the help of one, or at most two curates, now engages the energies of five vicars and eleven or twelve assistants. In other words, sixteen or seventeen clergymen are necessary now where two or three were then considered

sufficient. And you will notice that public opinion demands this. Anyone who proposed to revert to the former state of things, to pull down St. George's and St. John's, to close the different mission churches and chapels, and to merely hold two or three services here on a Sunday, with an occasional saint's-day service thrown in, would not be regarded as speaking seriously. All this extended ecclesiastical apparatus which has grown up, all these churches and services, and all the visiting and teaching and parochial organization of which they are the sign and the expression, are demanded by public opinion; by some means or another they have to be provided; and what happened here has, as we know, happened in every corner of England where the spirit of Christ has breathed over the dry bones of formalism, and quickened His Body into vigorous life once more.

That is one point on which, I think, most churchmen are agreed,—that if the work of the Church is to be maintained and developed, the number of clergy not merely must not be diminished, but must in many cases be considerably increased.

And then there is another point of almost equally general agreement. Most Englishmen demand that their clergy should be a married clergy and an educated clergy.

I know there are some who think differently on these points. There are some who think that a celibate clergy would be more effective than a married one; and there

are others who are quite content that their intellectual and social attainments should be of a very meagre description. But I think I am right in saying that these opinions do not represent those of the great majority of English churchmen. Though a celibate life may be advisable under certain circumstances, most of us feel that it should not be the rule. We don't want a clerical caste cut off from the sympathies and interests of ordinary life. We want men (I am now, remember, speaking as a layman) who are able to joy with our joys and to sorrow with our sorrows; who can prove by ruling their own households well that they are fitted to order the household of God. Nor do I believe that anyone who looks on a clergyman as something more than a mere mechanical administrator of certain ecclesiastical rites; who acknowledges that it is his function to teach and guide as well as to convey the sacraments, will be content that his social and intellectual attainments should fall below the level of those of the best-educated members of his congregation.

How, then, is a ministry of this kind to be obtained and maintained—a married ministry, an educated ministry, a ministry in which numbers are constantly augmenting in proportion to the demands of increasing population and increasing spiritual activity?

Well, one thing at any rate is necessary, and that is *money*. I don't say that it is all that is necessary. Laymen have it in their power to improve the character of

the ministry in other ways, no less important, than that of subscribing funds. They can do so, for instance, by sympathy, by co-operation, by loyalty; they can do so by dedicating the best and the ablest of their sons to its work; by encouraging them to take Holy Orders, however great the sacrifice may be from a worldly point of view. But when all is said and done men must live, and they cannot live without an income, and this income must be provided from one source or another.

Notice, then, how we stand at present with regard to this matter. The Church of England has considerable endowments; but these endowments have decreased a good deal in value in recent years, and they are now totally inadequate for her work.

I don't think that church laymen always recognize how much this is the case; but anyone who looks into the matter will find that there are very few benefices indeed in England at the present time in which a clergyman can live with any comfort on the income arising from endowments; while in many cases the attempt to do so would mean little less than slow starvation.

We hear people sometimes speak of fat livings; but the day of fat livings is for the most part past and gone. A certain number still afford a sufficient maintenance to their holders, but these are not numerous; and a great many which are supposed to be well endowed will be found on examination to yield a very small income indeed.

Take a concrete instance which will bring the matter to a point. This living of Kidderminster is supposed to be a good one. In days gone by it was looked upon as a prize well worth having; and though its revenues are diminished they are still considerable. Its total income from all sources is at present almost exactly £1000 a year, £100 of this being paid to the vicar as Workhouse Chaplain. But out of this has to be paid £200 a year for rates and taxes and agent's commission, £100 a year to Queen Anne's Bounty, at least £50 a year in necessary subscriptions, and at least £300 a year to the Curates Fund. These figures are authentic and reliable, and represent the average of the last three years. None of the items of expenditure can decrease; while under the present arrangements the subscriptions to the Curates Fund must considerably increase. In other words, the net income of the vicar of Kidderminster—of the vicar of one of the most important livings in England: of a living which is still supposed to be more or less of a prize—is at the most £350 a year, and that diminishing. On this he has to live in a vicarage of considerable size: the people of Kidderminster would probably resent it if their vicar lived in an eight-roomed villa; he has to dispense a considerable amount of hospitality; he has to feed and clothe and educate his family. You will see at once that the thing cannot be done. A man cannot live at the rate of £1200 or £1500 a year whose income is only a little

over £300. He has either to cut down his expenditure to the latter sum, or to supplement his income from other sources.

But why should he not do so, it may be said. £350 a year is a very good income. A man ought to be able to live on it, not in luxury of course, but in moderate comfort, and we don't think that a clergyman ought to expect more. If he wants more he should provide it for himself; it is not the Church's business to do so.

This is a kind of argument which one often hears made use of. Let us come to close quarters with it and see what it is worth.

You say that £350 a year is a sufficient income for the vicar of Kidderminster. But Kidderminster is an important parish; its vicar occupies an influential position and has very important functions to perform; functions which only a man of exceptional parts can adequately discharge. Such men, as we know, are rare. They are badly needed in every calling, and in every other calling the rate of remuneration they receive is proportionately high. What chance then have you of getting anything like a sufficient supply of them in parishes like this if you offer them an income which a third-rate man in any of the other learned professions would consider a mere starvation wage?

Of course, you will say that a clergyman should not consider the matter from a pecuniary point of view. And that is quite true; but that surely is an affair

between himself and his own conscience; not a consideration which laymen can fairly urge.

Moreover, what we have to consider is not merely the case of individual clergymen at the present time, but that of the supply of clergymen in the future; and what chance is there of that supply being sufficient and satisfactory if the so-called prizes of the profession are such as I have described?

Put the matter in this way. You have a son of exceptional ability; you can educate him, but you cannot leave him a large income. You have to think of a profession for him, and your judgment in the matter will at any rate have considerable influence on his decision. If he goes to the bar and succeeds moderately well there, he has the chance of making, say, £3000 or £4000 a year. If he goes into the medical profession, into commerce, or into the Indian Civil Service, and is equally successful, he will perhaps make as much. But if he takes Holy Orders, and, after years of hard work, is promoted to an important living like this, he gets £350 a year. That is to say, an income on which he cannot ever expect to be able to educate his children as he has been educated himself. Nor is this the worst of it. Though he has only £350 a year, he will be expected to meet claims which would only be possible for a man with three times that income to meet; and his inability to do so, and the shifts he will have to make in order to avoid doing so, will not

merely place him in an undignified and humiliating position, but may also seriously diminish his influence and seriously cripple his work.

I don't say that these facts will absolutely determine your decision, but I think you will admit that with most parents they will have considerable weight. A few would be willing to go into Holy Orders or to send their sons into Holy Orders, even though the remuneration was less than it is at present; but we are now speaking of the general supply, and, taking human nature as it is, there is no doubt that if the present state of things continues that supply will tend more and more to diminish. You will get men of course, but not the sort of men you want. If the Church's work is to be done properly her posts of influence and importance must be filled by men of corresponding parts: and such men will not be forthcoming in anything like sufficient numbers if a clerical career implies for them an almost inevitable struggle with vulgarizing difficulties and embarrassments.

Then as to the other alternative: the alternative of only appointing men to these positions who have got considerable private means. I don't think that anyone can consider this a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. For even suppose that such men were available; and as we know their number is very limited; just see what a proposal of this kind comes to. It comes to this, that the first question which a patron has to ask when a

living is vacant, is not whether such and such a man is a good man, or an able man, or a man fitted for the position, but what income he has of his own, and whether that income is a sufficient one. I am not stating a hypothetical case. It is one which is occurring every day. Again and again really good men have to be passed over, and mere nonentities appointed, just because the good men are poor men, while the nonentities are rich men. A more unsatisfactory state of things it is hard to imagine.

Now to bring all this into connection with the special object of to-day's appeal. You have been fortunate enough here in Kidderminster to have had a series of vicars who have been able men, and at the same time men of considerable private means. But you must not expect to be equally fortunate in the future. If this living fell vacant to-morrow, there would be great difficulty in finding anyone at all fitted for the position who could afford to take it under its present conditions. There is only one way, it seems to me, out of the difficulty; and that way lies through your pockets. If this living is to be filled properly its income must be left clear. That income is not a farthing too much for the claims which it has to meet. The first step in this direction is to provide the income of the assistant clergy. As I have already said, at least £300 a year at present has to be paid by the vicar towards the Assistant Curates Fund. He ought to be relieved

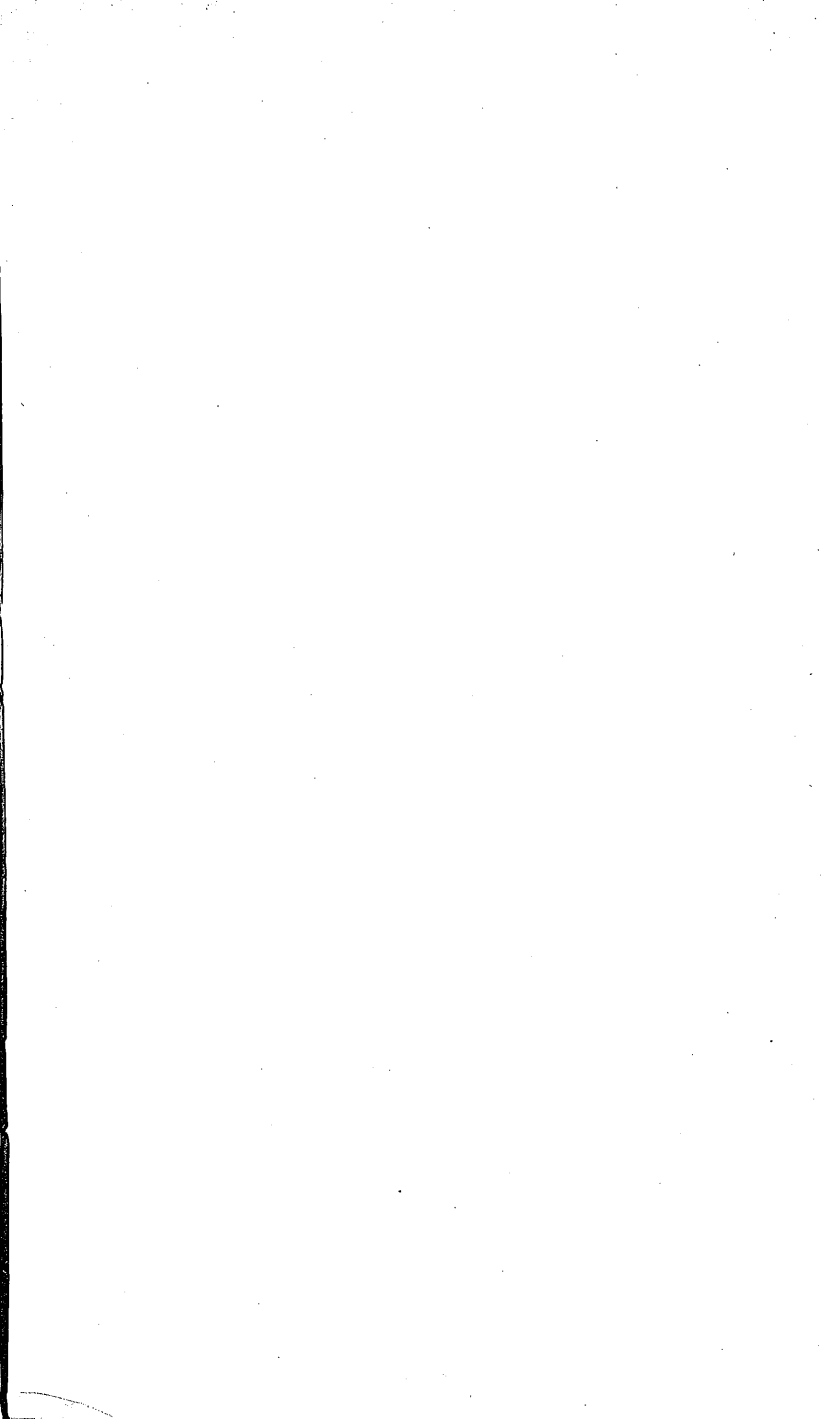
altogether of this responsibility. The ordinary congregation here probably cannot do this; but this is the parish church of an important manufacturing centre; it represents the ecclesiastical life and traditions of the whole town; and surely it has a strong claim on every churchman who makes his money in the town, even though he lives and worships elsewhere. In some other towns similarly situated the claim is, I believe, fully recognized. In one great northern centre, I understand that the leading manufacturers, although few of them now live in the town itself, guarantee the stipends of the assistant clergy of the parish church, and have thus made it possible to get a succession of really first-rate men as vicars there. It is only by some similar method that things can be placed on a satisfactory basis here.

Kidderminster has a considerable ecclesiastical reputation all through England. Its arrangements are to a certain extent regarded as setting a standard of ecclesiastical efficiency. This matter then has more than a local importance. If these arrangements are such that it will be practically impossible for the Church to avail herself of good material in the future, not merely will her work suffer here, but it will suffer in other parishes as well.

It is for this reason that an appeal like the present rises above the level of an ordinary charity sermon. Issues of even national importance are involved in the object with which it is concerned. There is no doubt

that ecclesiastical influence is increasing in England. The Church is every day becoming a more powerful factor in the national life. This will be all to the good provided that her power is exercised and her influence wielded by wise and liberal-minded and far-seeing men. It will not be to the good if her apparatus is directed by narrow-minded bigots or incompetent blunderers. And there will be a great danger of this being the case if important ecclesiastical positions have to be filled by men of second or third-rate attainments.

It is because I feel so strongly the far-reaching importance of this whole question, that I have ventured to address you this morning, and instead of preaching a sermon merely to state some plain facts and to let them speak for themselves. I only ask for these facts a fair consideration.



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